# Hypothermia: Lake Michigan's Year-Round Subtle Danger

- Hypothermia is ***serious***, affecting major organs like the brain, heart and lungs, which can lead to permanent damage and even *death*
- Average body temperature (98.6°F) only needs to fall 3.6°F to (95°F or cooler) to induce conditions favoring hypothermia *see the **1-10-1 Rule***
- Body temperature cools 25 times faster in cold water than in cold air
- Remember, you don't have to be swimming to increase your risk …accidents are always possible (boating, fishing, hiking near the lake etc.)

**Approximate Survivability Time at Various Temps**

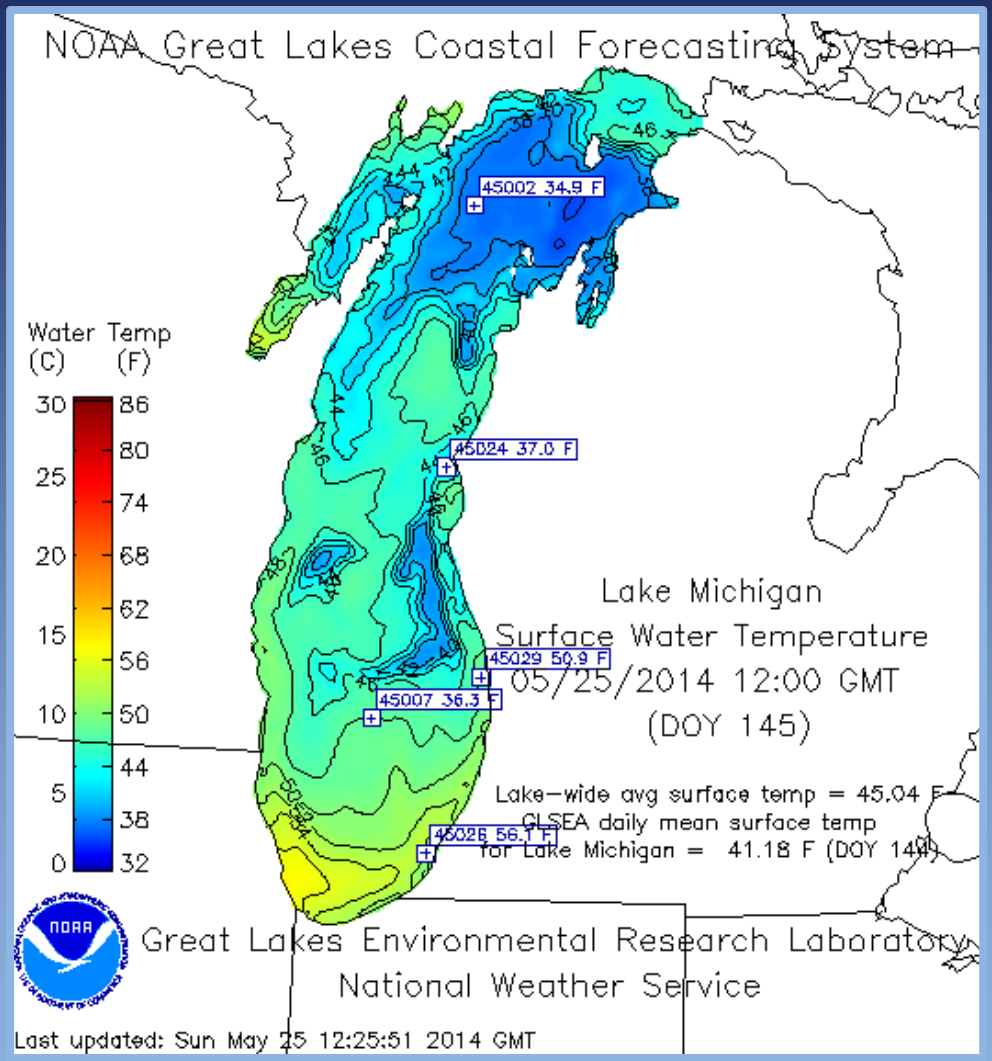
| Water Temp (°F) | Exhaustion or Unconsciousness | Survival Time |
|---|---|---|
| 0°-32° | < 15 minutes | 15-45 minutes |
| 33°-40° | 15-30 minutes | 30-90 minutes |
| 41°-50° | 30-60 minutes | 1-3 hours |
| 51°-60° | 1-2 hours | 1-6 hours |
| 61°-70° | 2-7 hours | 2-36 hours |
| 71°-80° | 3-12 hours | Indefinite |
| Over 80° | Indefinite | Indefinite |

**Courtesy: U.S. Coast Guard Great Lakes**

# It's Late May…Water Temperatures Say Otherwise

- Lake temperatures currently range anywhere from low 30s to the mid 50s
- Water temperatures can change drastically from one beach location to another, as well as at differing water depths from the shore
- Traveling between locations of cooler to warmer waters could provide a false sense of security…that water conditions are "safer"
- Even water temperatures in the 60s could lead to the onset of hypothermia in as little as a couple of hours
- Milder waters of 60°F could lead to a more gradual onset of hypothermia, making signals less noticeable or immediate to one's self

[Click here for detailed water temperatures]



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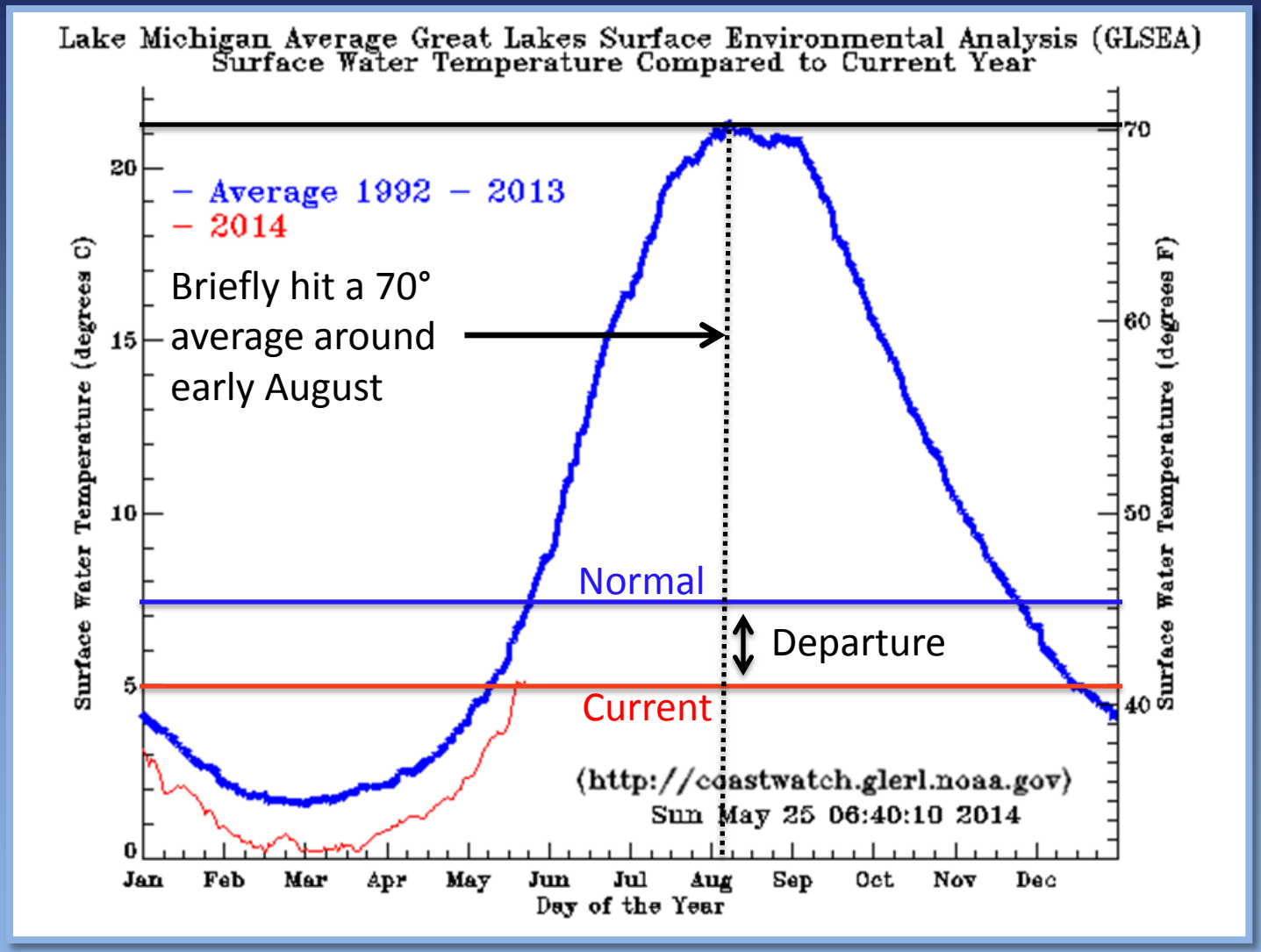

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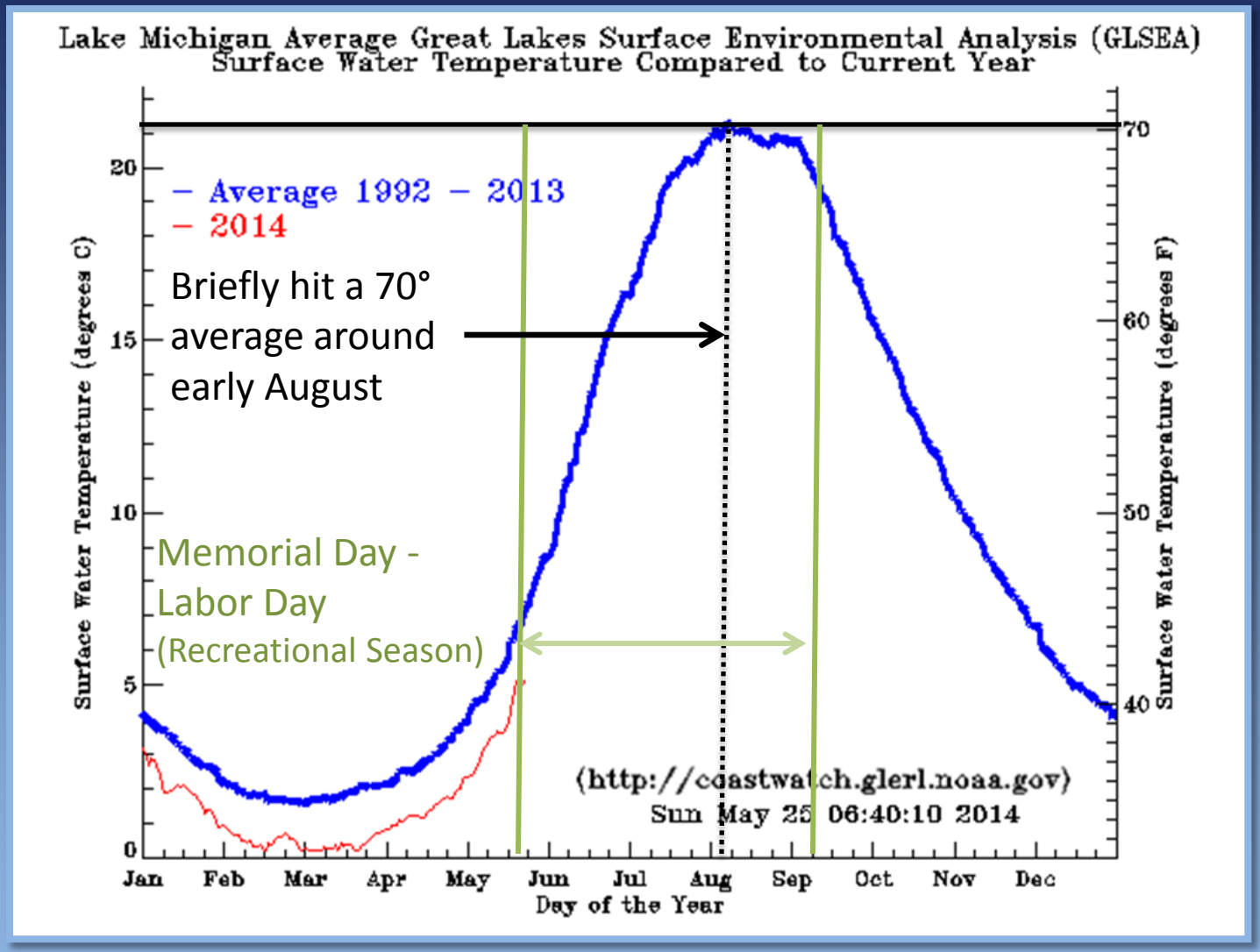

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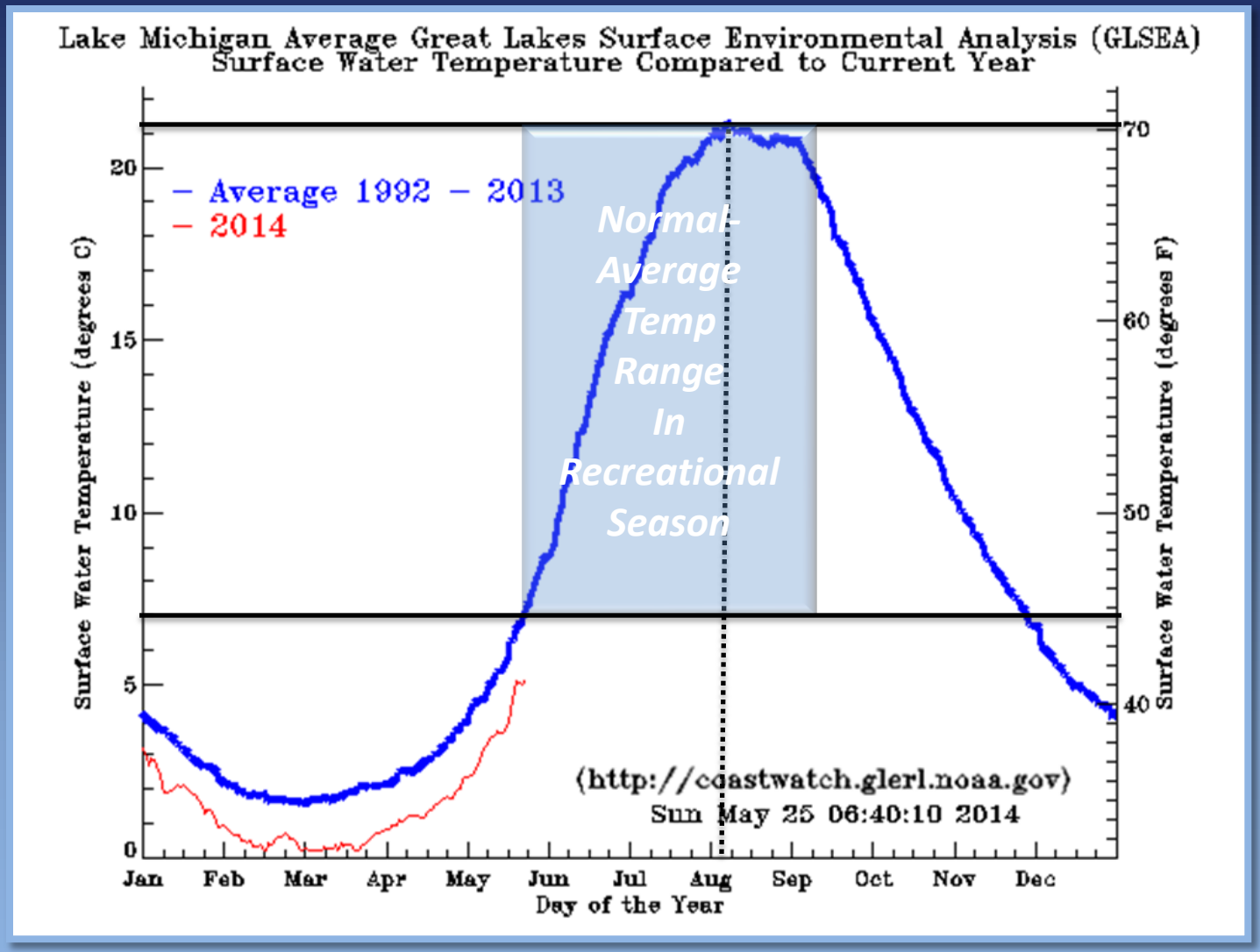

# Increasing Your Odds of Survival in Cold Water

- Always carry a life jacket or floating device, not just to keep afloat, but also to decrease the energy you would otherwise have to use to stay afloat by swimming
- Do not try to swim (you're losing heat energy!) to shore, unless the it is reachable or very close…many times people misjudge how close the shore may be
- Devote your effort to getting out of the water *only* if you are very near the shoreline or are able to climb atop a nearby floating object
- You must stay calm to decrease the chances of losing body heat at a faster rate
- Stay clothed to keep body heat closer to the body
- If in a group, huddle together to preserve heat

For full details on identifying hypothermia and other safety tips, please visit:

- Official Blog of the 9th Coast Guard District, "Hypothermia Kills: These tips can save your life"
- Official Blog of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, "Cold Water Survival – The 1-10-1 Rule"
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, "Hypothermia"